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P56949**IN THE CLAIMS**

The following claims are pending before the Office:

1 1. (Previously Presented) A method for processing and separating an imbricate formation
2 of flexible, flat objects during product feed, comprising continuously feeding the items in an
3 essentially regular formation to a transfer module and transferring the items from said transfer
4 module to a conveyor module, wherein flat objects are fluently fed to a guide within said transfer
5 module, and the flat objects during their conveyance are brought into an obliquely standing position
6 by the guide, and the flat objects from this position are separated in a defined number from the
7 remaining flat objects by a separator, and conveyed away by a conveyor.

1 2. (Previously Presented) The method according to claim 1, wherein the flat objects are
2 fed onto a guide surface of the guide and are conveyed lying in an overlapping manner, wherein the
3 trailing edge of a flat object in each case lies over the leading edge of the subsequent flat object, and
4 the objects during the transport over the guide surface are continuously erected, whereby on removal
5 of the flat objects from the guide the obliquely standing position of the flat objects is inclined
6 opposite to a direction of said conveyance.

1 3. (Previously Presented) The method according to claim 1, wherein the flat objects are
2 folded sheets, wherein the fold of each folded sheet in a trailing manner lies over a respective
3 subsequent folded sheet and the folded sheets which stand obliquely on removal from the guide
4 means stand on their cut-edge side.

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1 4. (Original) The method according to claim 2, wherein the flat objects are folded sheets,
2 wherein the fold of each folded sheet in a trailing manner lies over the respective subsequent folded
3 sheet and the folded sheets which stand obliquely on removal from the guide means stand on their
4 cut-edge side.

1 5. (Original) The method according to claim 1, wherein the erection of the flat objects is
2 effected by active braking or acceleration of the flat objects at least one edge by way of conveyor
1 means.

2 6. (Original) The method according to claim 1, wherein the flat objects on removal are
3 actively transferred into an obliquely standing position in the conveying direction by way of folding-
4 over means.

1 7. (Original) The method according to claim 1, wherein the flat objects before removal
2 are displaced transversely to their main conveying direction.

1 8. (Original) A device for carrying out the method according to claim 1 with a product
2 feed, comprising a conveyor means with a transfer module arranged after this and with a conveyor
3 module for removal of flat objects from the transfer module;

4 wherein the transfer module contains a guide means which comprises a guide surface which
5 at least in regions is inclined with respect to the horizontal, and that on the side proximal to the
6 removal device there is arranged a brim or abutment.

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1 9. (Original) The device according to claim 8, wherein the guide surface at least in regions
2 is designed concave or convex, or comprises at least two sections with a different inclination of the
3 guide surface.

1 10. (Original) The device according to claim 8, wherein the inclination of the guide
2 surface at least in regions is more than 30°.

1 11. (Previously Presented) The device according to claim 8, wherein the guide surface
2 comprises guide elements which serve for the regional acceleration and/or braking of the flat objects.

1 12. (Previously Presented) The device according to claim 8, wherein the brim or the
2 abutment is arranged movable with respect to the guide means.

1 13. (Original) The device according to claim 8, wherein, on that side of the guide means
2 which is proximal to the removal device, there are arranged active means for separating individual
3 objects or groups of objects.

1 14. (Original) The device according to claim 8, wherein the brim or the abutment comprises
2 movable elements conveying the objects in the removal direction.

1 15. (Original) The device according to claim 8, wherein, in the removal region of the

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objects, there are arranged means for transversely displacing the objects.

16. (Original) The device according to claim 8, wherein, above the guide means, there are arranged retaining means acting on the free edge of the objects.

17. (Previously Presented) A guide, comprising:
a path comprised of a first surface guiding leading lower edges of a plurality of flat, flexible items to a curved surface extending downwardly from said first surface to an inclined surface, said path supporting the lower edges of the items during progressive transformation in orientation of the items into an imbricate array while the items advance from said first surface and along said inclined surface; and
an abutment extending transversely above said path to obstructively engage serially a lower portion of each of the items descending said convexly curved surface and terminate said passage of each item along said inclined surface while the item is obliquely erect.

18. (Previously Presented) The guide set forth in claim 17, comprised of a mechanism positioned to remove the items from engagement with said abutment by grasping the upper edges of a defined number of the items and sequentially lifting the items grasped away from said inclined surface.

19. (Previously Presented) The guide set forth in claim 17, comprised of said inclined surface exhibiting an inclination of more than thirty degrees from horizontal.

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1 20. (Previously Presented) A guide, comprising:

2 an abutment; and

3 a path comprised of a first surface positioned to continuously receive leading lower
4 edges of a flow of flat, flexible items, and a curved surface leading downwardly from said first
5 surface to an inclined surface terminated by said abutment while said path supports leading lower
6 edges of the items with said flow of the flexible items advancing from said first surface during
7 progressive transformation in orientation of the items within the flow into a formation with the items
8 oriented obliquely erect at said abutment.

1 21. (Previously Presented) The guide of claim 20, comprising a conveyor positioned to
2 sequentially remove from said path, a defined number of the items embraced by said abutment.

1 22. (Previously Presented) The guide of claim 20, with said curved surface comprising a
2 convex curve.

1 23. (Previously Presented) The guide of claim 20, with said curved surface comprising a
2 concave curve.

1 24. (Previously Presented) The guide of claim 20, comprised of said first surface disposed
2 to engage cut edges of the items with folded edges of the items trailing the cut edges along said first
3 surface.

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1 25. (Previously Presented) The guide of claim 20, comprised of said path engaging cut
2 edges of the items with folded edges of the items trailing the cut edges along said first surface.

1 26. (Previously Presented) Guiding, comprised of:
2 receiving leading lower edges of a flow of flat flexible items upon a first surface
3 leading to a curved surface extending downwardly from said first surface, with upper edges of the
4 items trailing the lower edges during said flow along said first surface;

5 aligning the items by precipitating a shift in orientation of the items within the flow
6 as the items progress from said first surface via said curved surface and along a downwardly inclined
7 surface with an abutment extending transversely across said inclined surface causing an obstructive
8 engagement of a lower portion of a forwardmost of the items while the forwardmost item is
9 obliquely erect; and

10 removing a defined number of the items seriatim from said engagement.

1 27. (Previously Presented) Guiding, as set forth in claim 26, comprised of removing the
2 items from said engagement by individually engaging the upper edges and sequentially lifting the
3 items corresponding to the upper edges away from said inclined surface.

1 28. (Previously Presented) Guiding, as set forth in claim 26, comprised of providing said
2 inclined surface with an inclination of more than thirty degrees from horizontal.

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1 29. (Previously Presented) Guiding, comprised of:

2 receiving cut leading edges of a flow of flat flexible items upon a first surface leading
3 to a curved surface extending downwardly from said first surface, with folded edges of the items
4 trailing the cut edges during said flow along said first surface;

5 aligning the items within the flow by allowing the flow to progress from said first
6 surface via said curved surface and along a downwardly inclined surface with an abutment extending
7 transversely across said inclined surface causing an obstructive engagement of a lower portion of a
8 forwardmost of the items while the forwardmost item is obliquely erect; and

9 removing a defined number of the items seriatim from said engagement.

1 30. (Previously Presented) Guiding, as set forth in clam 29, comprised of removing the
2 items from said engagement by sequentially grasping individual ones of the folded edges and
3 individually lifting the items corresponding to the folded edges grasped away from said inclined
4 surface.

1 31. (Previously Presented) Guiding, as set forth in clam 29, comprised of providing said
2 inclined surface with an inclination of more than thirty degrees from horizontal.